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Contact: Micah Swafford  
202-225-2132

## **Istook Fights Clinton-Gore Effort to Kill Abstinence Education**

*Washington, D.C.* -- The Clinton-Gore Administration is trying to kill an effort to tell teens not to have sex until they are married. Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK), who is trying to expand that program, won a bipartisan victory yesterday to overcome Clinton's opposition to abstinence education.

The Administration's new budget tries to kill the new abstinence education funding which Istook had won in last year's legislation. **"Despite eight years in office, President Clinton has never proposed a single penny to tell our kids they should not have sex; instead, he wants more of our tax dollars to promote 'safe sex' and to give condoms to our kids. We're trying to tell kids to wait until marriage, and he doesn't want them to hear that. He should be ashamed of himself. We should support what parents teach their kids, not undermine it,"** said Istook. **"Teens need to hear a clear message that abstinence is the right thing, and it's the only sure way to prevent teen pregnancy and avoid sexually-transmitted diseases. We should support what parents teach their kids, not undermine it."**

Last year, Istook successfully offered an amendment for a \$20-million (40%) increase in federal grants to promote teen abstinence for FY 2001. However, the Clinton-Gore Administration's new budget proposes killing those funds, and instead seeks \$35-million more to promote "safe sex" and to give contraceptives to teens. This year, Istook successfully increased the program by \$10 million, for a total of \$30 million for FY 2002.

Istook's amendment requires the Administration to go ahead with setting up the abstinence grants without delay. It was attached to the supplemental appropriations bill, as that bill was approved by the House Appropriations Committee. Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman John Porter formally offered Istook's amendment to the full committee, which approved it with bipartisan support.

"Even if Mr. Clinton doesn't care about the lives damaged by teen sex, the rest of us do. We won't give up trying to teach them that doing what's right will also mean a better and healthier future for them," Istook said.